



## SPECIAL TRANSLATION

SOURCE: SURINAAMS NIEUWS (Surinam News)

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Problems Concerning the Eastern Border of Surinam

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**NOTE**

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No. 41, 16 October 1971, pp. 1 - 2

## PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE EASTERN BORDER OF SURINAM

### The Government Is Still Tinkering With the Borders

Questions arose during the past few years at the western border of Surinam that threatened to become problems, but at present our Government is working to bring problems at the eastern border to a solution.

(concluded this year)  
The agreement/between Surinam's Prime Minister Dr. J. SEDNEY and the Gu~~y~~ana~~n~~ Premier FORBES BURNHAM has brought the border question with Gu~~y~~ana to a temporarily favorable end, which is in the interest of both countries. The dimensions the conflict threatened to assume were fortunately recognized in time and the consequences faced, so that one has to rejoice about the insight and the self-restraint the Government leaders were able to muster in this respect.

Unregulated border questions are an inheritance from a period when the responsibility for international problems concerning Surinam was not in the hands of Surinam organs. Now that matters have taken on a somewhat different aspect, and our country has at least something to say

about its political management, which includes the borders with neighboring countries, it becomes clear that our Government is making serious efforts in this respect.

#### LAWA, THE PRINCIPAL RIVER?

The official definition of the territory of the then colony can be found in the explanatory memorandum of the bill for the determination of the regulation for the government's course of action in the colony of Surinam, and is dated 4 April 1864. In it, the Marowijne is mentioned as the eastern border. The French side had suggested in 1860 that either the Lawa or the Tapanahoni should be regarded as the principal river. A French-Netherlands commission took up the two rivers in 1861, which gave rise to the conclusion that the Lawa had to be regarded as the principal river.

After that, the question was regarded as settled, with the understanding that the area between both rivers belonged to Surinam. However, the case of the border became problematic when ~~appreciable quantities~~ <sup>were</sup> of gold ~~discovered~~ <sup>were</sup> discovered in this area. The area became once more a contested territory, with the main issue at that time, however, a greatly desired metal. To settle the controversy, it was presented in 1888 by agreement to the Czar of Russia. The binding pronouncement of the Russian grand-duke turned out to the advantage of Surinam. He determined that the Lawa ~~Marowijne~~ had to be considered as the upper course of the Marowijne and that the

territory between both rivers thus belonged to Surinam.

LITANI RIVER OR MAROWIJNE CREEK

After this pronouncement of the Russian Czar, a new quarrel arose about the Lawa River around 1915. It apparently had not yet been fully established what belonged to the Lawa River. It had to be decided whether the Litani River or the Marowijne Creek (the eastern branch of this border river) is the continuation of the Lawa. The matter has therefore been solved only in part.

Even unsolved, the question remained how the line of demarcation had to be defined within the total course of the river itself. Again, only a partial solution was found, that is to say, a solution for part of the river's course, namely, the part lying between the river islands of PORTAL and STOELMANSEILAND. Negotiations still have to be carried out about the sections north of Portal island and south of Stoelmanseiland.

This week, a delegation of the Surinam Government, composed of ~~THE~~ Ministers ESSED and POLANEN, the Staten members L. MUNGRA, A. KAMPERVEEN and Ch. CALOR, and Messrs. D.G.A. FINDLAY, journalist, and H. LIM A PO, lawyer, has been in Paris for negotiations. The Netherlands side taking part in the discussions was composed of Messrs. VAN SANTEN of the Foreign Ministry and DE HOOP SCHEFFER of the Netherlands Embassy in Paris.